

Fertcare Training

Background

Fertilizers can cause environmental and food safety problems if they are not used and managed properly. Towards managing these risks, the Fertilizer Industry Federation of Australia and the Australian Fertiliser Services Association have committed to the comprehensive training of industry personnel through the Fertcare program. Fertcare aims to maximise productivity and minimise environment and food safety risks.

Who should be trained?

Anyone who has a direct involvement in how fertilizers are transported, stored, applied and used – through providing advice or directly handling products, should complete the appropriate level of Fertcare training. To help members of the industry to decide whether a staff member needs to be trained or not, the following definition of Fertcare ‘eligibility’ has been developed:

Eligible staff are those employed or contracted for 12 months or longer:

- *who provide advice on fertilizer and soil ameliorant products use to end users, whether in a sales, advisory or logistical role; or*
- *who transport or apply fertilizer and soil ameliorant products to land; or*
- *who are involved in the storage and handling of fertilizer and soil ameliorants, at the point where they are loaded and leave the site.*

Staff working in these areas are not considered ‘eligible’ if they are:

- *Casual and seasonal employees and do not provide advice; or*
- *Exclusively operate loading machinery.*

Under these circumstances, the employee must:

- *be managed by a Fertcare trained supervisor; and*
- *not provide fertilizer advice to end-users; and*
- *be briefed by the supervisor about the environment, food safety and OH&S risks associated with fertilizers.*

Staff that will become ‘eligible’ after 12 months of service should receive the Fertcare induction material while they await the opportunity to complete training.

The decision as to which level of training is appropriate for each staff member is the responsibility of the business, based on the guidance provided by this fact sheet.

Examples of Fertcare Eligibility

Margaret works at a country fertilizer depot and drives a spreading machine on contract jobs. She is also active in sales and talking to customers.

Margaret should complete either Level A or Level B training, depending on how she spends most of her time. The Level A ‘spreading’ elective is a critical component of Fertcare for spreader operators, and the Level B course will improve her sales and advisory skills.

John works in a rural retail store and spends most of the time serving customers on everything from electric fences to insurance, as well as liquid, bagged and bulk fertilizers.

John should complete Level B. He will learn a lot about fertilizer products and their role in plant growth and it will help him provide good advice to customers. He will also understand when he should refer the customer to a Level C trained person.

Kylie works in the same store as John and is a chemical specialist, advising growers about the correct chemicals to use for particular problems. She helps out with everything else but spends very little time on fertilizers.

Kylie doesn't need to complete Fertcare training as she can always call on John. However she may choose to do Level B as reaccreditation for Agsafe which she has to do anyway.

Darren drives a truck that transports fertilizers from the ports where products are delivered from overseas, to rural distribution centres across the State.

Darren should complete the Fertcare Level A units of Basic Product Knowledge and Transport

William is a jack-of-all-trades and drives a loader on a casual basis at a fertilizer distribution centre managed by Scott. Scott has completed Fertcare Level A, including the 'Storage' elective.

William doesn't need to complete Fertcare training as long as he is being supervised by Scott, and has been briefed about the environment, food safety and OH&S risks associated with fertilizers.

Emma only ever drives a loader at a distribution centre, where she loads trucks and moves 1 tonne bags around the shed. She provides no advice to farmers, informally or formally.

Emma doesn't need to complete Fertcare training, as long as she is supervised by a Fertcare trained manager, and has been briefed about the environment, food safety and OH&S risks associated with fertilisers.

Jamie has been working as a plant nutrition advisor for less than a year, and spends most of his time talking with farmers about their fertilizer needs.

While Jamie is not yet considered 'eligible' for Fertcare training as he has been employed for less than a year, he should seek to enrol in a Level C course as soon as possible – and certainly before his 1 year employment anniversary.

Luke works as a contractor for a number of fertilizer outlets, collecting and despatching soil samples for analysis. He has the required skills and experience in sampling, and does not generate fertilizer recommendations, or provide other nutrient advice to end-users.

While Luke does not need to complete Fertcare training, he should be supervised by someone trained in Fertcare B or C. He could also be encouraged to complete Fertcare B training as it will provide valuable background to his sampling work.

If anyone is uncertain about whether someone should be Fertcare trained or not, they can contact the FIFA office on (02) 6230 6987 or fertilizer@fifa.asn.au.

Further information can also be found at www.fertcare.com.au.
